



International
Labour
Organization



International Year
of Cooperatives

Innovative approaches to addressing informality through the social and solidarity economy

Time: 15:00 – 16:30 (CET)

Date: July 3, 2025

Duration: 1,5 hours

Languages: English & Spanish

Background and introduction

The year 2025 marks the second United Nations [International Year of Cooperatives](#) (IYC2025), offering a renewed opportunity to spotlight the transformative potential of cooperatives and the social and solidarity economy (SSE) in the world of work. As part of the year-round celebrations and to commemorate the International Day of Cooperatives on 5 July, ILO [Cooperative, Social and Solidarity Economy \(COOP/SSE\) Unit](#) and [Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing](#) (WIEGO) are co-organizing a webinar on decent work for workers in the informal economy in and through the SSE) showcasing some good and emerging practices from different regions of the world. The webinar will also highlight the [resolution and conclusions concerning the general discussion on addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for decent work](#), adopted by the International Labour Conference on 13 June, 2025 ten years after the adoption of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204).

The International Labour Organization (ILO), as the only UN specialized agency with an explicit mandate on the SSE, plays a key role in shaping global policy frameworks and supporting Member States to advance decent work in and through the SSE. The ILO's work on cooperatives and the wider SSE is guided by the [ILO Constitution](#), the [Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 \(No. 193\)](#), and the [Resolution, Strategy and Action Plan](#) concerning decent work and the SSE. [ILO Recommendation No. 204 concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy](#) calls for the promotion of enterprises including cooperatives and other SSE entities in policy frameworks to facilitate the transition to the formal economy. Examples around the globe showcase that the SSE offers a viable pathway toward formalization.

WIEGO is a global network supporting the movement of workers in informal employment, especially women and people living in poverty. The mission of WIEGO is to improve their working conditions and to challenge the systems that cause poverty and inequality to build a more just world of work. For the past few years, WIEGO has been actively promoting the potential of the SSE to significantly improve the working conditions of workers in informal employment. This includes recognizing the SSE's role in advancing decent work and contributing to formalization processes from the perspective of the workers themselves.

The informal economy continues to be a defining feature of labour markets globally, and nearly 60 per cent of the world's workers operate in the informal economy. Decent work deficits are often more pronounced for them, and they lack access to social protection, rights at work and voice and representation.

Formalization – bringing economic units under regulation and securing adequate labour and social protection for workers – is essential for achieving social justice, decent work, and sustainable development. SSE entities such as cooperatives enable formalization by transforming what are often marginal survival activities into legally protected work, fully integrated into the mainstream economy.

This webinar will explore how the SSE, as a people-centred economic model rooted in solidarity and collective action, can advance the rights at work and improve the livelihoods of workers in the informal economy in various sectors in different regions of the world.

Objectives and key highlights:

This webinar aims to:

- Highlight practical experiences of cooperatives and other SSE entities in addressing the needs and rights of workers in the informal economy.
- Present country cases and organizational initiatives that demonstrate pathways to formalization through the SSE.
- Provide a platform for knowledge sharing and dialogue among ILO, WIEGO, partners and networks of workers in the informal economy.

Draft programme:

Introduction / opening remarks by the ILO / Moderator: Simel Esim, Head of Cooperative, Social and Solidarity Economy Unit, ILO

Opening remarks / WIEGO: Federico Parra, Social and Solidarity Economy Specialist, WIEGO

Pathways to formalization in and through the SSE: What role for the new ILC resolution on innovative approaches to transition to formality: Mansour Omeira, ILO COOP/SSE

Country presentations:

- 1. Colombia - Waste Pickers' Cooperatives**
 - Marta Elena Iglesias, Planeta Verde
- 2. Nigeria - Solidarity savings and credit cooperative**
 - Gbenga Komolafe, Federation of Informal Workers' Organisations of Nigeria (FIWON)
- 3. Argentina - Childcare cooperatives**
 - Natalia Zarza, Union de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras de la Economía Popular (UTEP)
- 4. South Asia - rural economy**
 - Sonia George (SEWA Kerala)

How the SSE is supporting formalization in diverse informal economy contexts (10 minutes)

- Federico Parra, WIEGO

Open discussion (20 minutes)

- Open discussion and Q&A

Closing remarks (5 minutes)

- Simel Esim, ILO